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The Effects of Artwork Experience on Fashion Retail Store Satisfaction

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Keywords: Escapist experience, entertainment experience, esthetic experience, store satisfaction

Companies deliberately use artwork as a means of communicating with their customers because of a growing interest in art and culture as components of one's quality of life. This communication employs a variety of methods, from sponsorship of art shows and exhibitions to incorporation of art into products, and these marketing strategies have been shown to effectively address customers' emotional needs.

Customers want more than just the functional attributes of products and services; they seek experiential consumption that is special and memorable (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Unlike traditional marketing, the goal of marketing in an experience economy is to provide differentiated experiences that are more effective in producing positive emotions in customers. Unlike mobile and online distributors, retail stores serve as points of contact for customers and places to maximize the brand experience. Because of this distinction, offline stores can utilize the authenticity of a piece of art as an effective marketing tool, and can elicit positive emotions from customers by transferring the prestigious image associated with artwork to the retail space or brand (the spillover effect).

This study examines the emotional value and store satisfaction that results from exhibiting artwork in retail environment. The research topic is focused on how combining opportunities to enjoy visual art with the sale of products or services can trigger positive emotions in customers and ultimately raise the level of store satisfaction. This study also investigates the moderating effect of a customer's level of art enjoyment by assuming that the influence of an in-store art experience on a customer's emotions will vary depending on the customer's level of art enjoyment.

One-hundred-sixteen students participated in the study (M age = 24; female only). They watched a three minute video in which several shops were shown to give the perception of walking and browsing shops with artworks in a department store. The artwork we specifically presented was 'Sacred Heart' by the renowned artist Jeff Koons who is known for his reproductions of banal objects at a large scale. The artwork is made of stainless steel with mirror-finished surfaces.

After watching the video, the participants were asked to rate their aesthetic perception of the artwork and their knowledge regarding the artwork and artist. In addition, their perceived value and store satisfaction were asked at the end of survey. All items were measured on 5-point scales (1 = Not at all, 5 = Very much). The results of this study confirmed that one's art experience

within a retail shop is composed of several types of experience: escapist, educational, entertainment, and esthetic. This finding is consistent with previous studies that measured service experiences (Hosany & Withman, 2009; Oh et al., 2007). The study reveals that the escapist, entertainment, and esthetic experiences have significant influences on emotional value. However, the educational experience does not significantly influence emotional value.

Customers can have an educational experience if a store effectively provides information about the exhibited artwork and the backgrounds of artists. This will also help contagion with real artists through artworks that lack functionality and practicality, and add special value with a positive emotion to the customer experience in the specific store.

An individual's level of enjoyment of art also seems to affect the influences of entertainment and esthetic experiences on emotional value. In other words, a person who normally has a deep interest in art or artists is more likely to view the artwork displayed within a retail environment positively. The study also confirms that if a person does not have interest or prior knowledge of the artwork, the esthetic experience gained from the artwork will still create positive emotions.

This study attempts to establish customers' perceived value from corporate art spaces that use well-known artwork. Displaying artwork within a fashion store provides a marketing alternative that is completely different from the traditional marketing strategies of offline stores. The practical significance of this study is that it provides guidance for effective art marketing strategies and confirms the potential for application of the experience economy theory proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998).

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